

ness policy concerning the products railways are to carry; all you have to do is to consider whether the creation of a rate, whatever it may be, may double trade in one direction or another."

The basis upon which the bill is founded is utterly vicious. It attempts to establish a principle which the parliament of Canada should not countenance. The proposed subsection 2 begins as follows:

The board may consider the question of what should be reasonable compensation under the circumstances—

That is the first statement in the subsection. The remainder of the subsection is a complete contradiction of the opening sentence. It is as follows:

... and may establish a rate structure in the interests of trade development ...

On what basis? Whether the experimental rate for the time being, or in itself, gives a reasonable compensation to the railway companies for the services they are to perform. In the face of the difficulties which confront railways, I submit that the house should not accept the bill, and should never give favourable consideration to the principle involved.

The purpose of the Board of Railway Commissioners is to maintain an even balance between the man who has goods to transport and the companies transporting them. This bill does not help to do that. If parliament does anything, it should introduce legislation which would wipe out all the political rates which from time to time have been established, and should say to the Board of Railway Commissioners: "Your job as a judicial body is to establish a rate structure which will give fair treatment to all parts of Canada, to all people in Canada, to the railway companies themselves and the men operating the railways." I have some interest in the men operating the railways. The wages of many of them have been reduced, and others have been put out of the service because the railway companies could not earn enough to pay the wages they had formerly paid, or to maintain their staffs in full force.

The hon. member was right when he said that the provision contained in the bill was permissive, but not mandatory. However, the mere fact that parliament enacts a statute indicates its desire that the railway commission shall accept the statute as an instruction. The mere fact that the provision is permissive and not mandatory does not

mean that parliament has not expressed its will. Parliament, if it passes this bill, clearly indicates its desire that the Board of Railway Commissioners shall do certain acts. If not, why would the bill be introduced at all? If not, why would parliament pass it? Why should we consider it if we did not expect the Board of Railway Commissioners to act upon it? The mere fact, therefore, that it is permissive and not mandatory does not for a single moment take away the fact that it is an instruction, and that it is an expression of the will and desire of parliament. I submit that the Canadian people, represented in parliament, do not want this legislation passed. Their railway burden is already all that they can carry. To add this additional burden would simply be saying that parliament wants the railways to struggle along as best they can, to find the means for operating their systems as best they can without any regard for the returns in respect of services they perform. If the hon. member does not desire to withdraw the bill, in the light of what has been stated I submit the house should, in the event of a vote, reject it.

Mr. W. J. LOUCKS (Rosetown): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to take part in the debate, but owing to the fact that a year ago I supported a bill concerning domestic freight rates I felt in duty bound at this time to say a few words. In my view we should compliment the Minister of Railways (Mr. Manion) upon the pressure he brought to bear upon the two railways to get for us the help we have been given. I endorse what the previous speaker has said, namely, that we should consider this matter in the light of the fact that our railroads are running at a loss. As a producer and an exporter I am interested in rate structure. There is no doubt that the help already given will be in the interests of the consumers in British Columbia and the exporters in Saskatchewan. When I am informed that at the interprovincial conference there was an agreement between representatives from Saskatchewan and British Columbia upon a fifty per cent reduction in the domestic rate, I think we have reason to be well pleased.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hour for private and public bills having expired, the house will resume the debate on the motion that the Speaker do now leave the chair for the house to resolve itself into committee of ways and means.